

Please know that I am in a safe location, completely unharmed + healthy (put on weight in fact); I have been treated w/ the utmost respect + kindness. I wanted to write you all a well thought out letter (but I didn't know if my cell mates would be leaving in the coming days or the coming months restricting my time but primarily) I could only but write the letter a paragraph at a time, just the thought of you all sends me into a fit of tears. If you could say I have "suffered" at all throughout this whole experience it is only in knowing how much suffering I have put you all through; I will never ask you to forgive me as I do not deserve forgiveness. I remember mom always telling me that all in all in the end the only one you really have is God. I have come to a place in experience where, in every sense of the word, I have surrendered myself to our creator b/c literally there was no else . . . + by God + by your prayers I have felt tenderly cradled in freefall. I have been shown in darkness, light + have learned that even in prison, one can be free. I am grateful. I have come to see that there is good in every situation, sometimes we just have to look for it. I pray each each day that if nothing else, you have felt a certain closeness + surrender to God as well + have formed a bond of love + support amongst one another . . . I miss you all as if it has been a decade of forced separation. I have had many a long hour to think, to think of all the things I will do w/ Lex, our first family camping trip, the first meeting @ the airport. I have had many hours to think how only in your absence have I finally @ 25 years old come to realize your place in my life. The gift that is each one of you + the person I could + could not be if you were not a part of my life, my family, my support. I DO NOT want the negotiations for my release to be your duty, if there is any other option take it, even if it takes more time. This should never have become your burden. I have asked these women to support you; please seek their advice. If you have not done so already, [REDACTED] can contact [REDACTED] who may have a certain level of experience with these people. None of us could have known it would be this long but know I am also fighting from my side in the ways I am able + I have a lot of fight left inside of me. I am not breaking down + I will not give in no matter how long it takes. I wrote a song some months ago that says, "The part of me that pains the most also gets me out of bed, w/out your hope there would be nothing left . . ." aka—The thought of your pain is the source of my own, simultaneously the hope of our reunion is the source of my strength. Please be patient, give your pain to God. I know you would want me to remain strong. That is exactly what I am doing. Do not fear for me, continue to pray as will I + by God's will we will be together soon.

All my everything,

KAYLA.

Mr. MCCAIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, can the Chair tell me what the status of the floor is and how much time I have to speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business with 20-minute grants.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I thank the Chair.

#### DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, despite the fact that we are just days away from the Department of Homeland Security shutting down, we don't yet have an agreement to fund a clean bill to keep the Department of Homeland Security operating. Unfortunately, we haven't heard from the majority that there is interest in addressing this issue this week. I think that is very unfortunate.

We are ready to work to pass a clean full-year bill to fund the Department of Homeland Security, and last week we actually asked unanimous consent to take up and pass the clean bill that Senator MIKULSKI and I introduced to fund the Department for the rest of the year and to then have votes on immigration matters. I think we are happy to debate immigration, but we don't believe we should do it on the bill that would fund the Department of Homeland Security. Unfortunately, that unanimous consent was rejected.

Now, we could pass a clean bill this afternoon, and we should. We should stop playing politics with our national security. In just a few days, with our Nation dealing with real and dangerous terror threats, some Members of Congress have suggested we should shut down the Department of Homeland Security. Because of their extreme opposition to the President's Executive actions on immigration, they are willing to put at risk the security and safety of this country. So I have come to the floor today to talk about why we need to put politics aside for the security of our Nation and why we need to pass a full-year funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security.

A short-term budget, which is what some Members of Congress are discussing, should be off the table. A short-term budget, a continuing resolution, or a CR, means the government is on autopilot, and that is extraordinarily bad for business and for security. We need to pass a full-year bill.

If the Department of Homeland Security operates under a short-term budget, grants to protect our cities and our Nation's ports from terror attacks would be halted, grants to police and firefighters won't be awarded, contracts and acquisitions would be postponed, hiring would be delayed, and employee training would be scaled back.

Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson recently said:

As long as this Department continues to operate on a CR, we are prevented from funding key homeland security initiatives. These include funding for new grants to state and local law enforcement, additional border security resources, and additional Secret Service resources. Other core missions, such as aviation security and protection of federal installations and personnel, are also hampered.

A little while ago, Senator BOOKER and I held a conference call with Mayor

Anisse Parker of Houston, TX, Mayor Michael Nutter of Philadelphia, and New York City Deputy Commissioner of Intelligence and Counterterrorism John Miller. They talked about how very real and dangerous the consequences would be for cities if we don't fund Homeland Security. Our big cities and our major urban areas are unfortunately top targets for terrorists, and if we don't pass a full-year funding bill for DHS, a grant program specifically designed to help cities plan, prepare for, and defend against possible attacks will be halted.

One of the things that Deputy Commissioner Miller talked about is the fact that there have been 16 plots that have been thwarted against New York City, and that was done, to a great extent, by programs funded through the Department of Homeland Security. At risk is nearly \$600 million in funding to keep our cities safe that will be put on hold. Without those resources, cities and the millions who live there are at risk; and that is not to mention all of the other small communities around this country that are at risk. That is just unacceptable.

Now, Mayor Nutter, from Philadelphia, talked about how they are not able to train first responders because the funding is uncertain. They do not know if we are going to get a bill, and so they do not know if they can continue to train. He said they do not have reimbursement for their fusion centers if we don't get a funding bill for Homeland Security. He said: It is not right to put the heavy burden on those on the front lines, those first responders who are there in cases of emergency.

Mayor Parker from Houston talked about her employees at the police department, at the public health agency, and the Department of Homeland Security employees who are affected by our failure to get a funding bill. She said right now they are dealing with measles in the city of Houston, and it is very important they have public health workers who can go out and deal with that epidemic. Yet those health employees are going to be at risk if we don't get a clean funding bill. She also mentioned the three airports they operate and one of the busiest ports in the world, and those are at risk if we can't get a funding bill.

Our major commercial ports are also targets for terrorism attacks. If we don't pass a full-year funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security, the Port Security Grant Program will be put on hold, meaning nearly \$100 million won't be allocated to keep our ports safe throughout the Nation.

One of those programs where we will see a gap is in radiation detection. One of the things our investigators do, as they are looking at making sure our ports are secure, is to check for radiation, for nuclear materials that might be coming in to this country. Yet they won't have the instruments, the equipment they need to do that if we don't get a clean funding bill.

Deputy Commissioner Miller talked about, as I said, the 16 terrorist plots against New York City that have been thwarted. But he also pointed out that at virtually every major New York City event when they do the security, whether it is the New York marathon or New Year's Eve in New York City, the security that protects those events is funded in whole or in part by Department of Homeland Security programs.

A short-term budget for the Department of Homeland Security would mean there are no new grants for police and firefighters in every State in the country. I don't mean that is a new program. I mean the grant funding doesn't turn over each year. That means our firefighters in New Hampshire won't be able to apply for SAFER grants again to make sure we have the force we need.

I heard from our Laconia police chief in New Hampshire last week, and he talked about what the impact would be if they can't get that funding from the Department of Homeland Security. He told a story about how they had been able to save a young man, 22 years old, who was snowmobiling and who went through Lake Winnisquam in New Hampshire. The reason they were able to save his life was because they had four firefighters they could put into water-resistant suits and send them out, because they had additional funding through a SAFER grant, giving them the ability both to train those firefighters and to make sure there was somebody else there directing them and taking that call. So there are very real impacts if we fail to get this funding done.

In the last 2 years, New Hampshire alone has received more than \$7 million in grants to provide training for more than 3,800 first responders across our State and another \$6 million over that same period to help hire more firefighters—firefighters such as those in Laconia who saved that 22-year-old young man. Nearly 300 police officers in New Hampshire have been given live-action training for active-shooter situations in recent years. We were also able to train and equip the State police bomb squad and the Nashua bomb squad—Nashua is the second largest city in New Hampshire—through those DHS resources.

A short-term budget, a continuing resolution for the Department of Homeland Security puts all of these critical support programs in jeopardy, and that is why we are hearing from communities across the country. That is why last week we got letters from the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National Association of Counties, the International Association of Emergency Managers, and the International Association of Firefighters, all calling on Congress to pass a clean, full-year funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security. They understand that our failing to do that would be disastrous.

Three previous Department of Homeland Security Secretaries, two Repub-

licans and one Democrat, did the same last week. Then on Sunday the Wall Street Journal wrote an editorial. I ask unanimous consent that editorial be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Wall Street Journal, Feb. 8, 2015]

#### CAN THE GOP CHANGE?

Republicans in Congress are off to a less than flying start after a month in power, dividing their own conference more than Democrats. Take the response to President Obama's immigration order, which seems headed for failure if not a more spectacular crack-up.

That decree last November awarded work permits and de facto legal status to millions of undocumented aliens and dismayed members of both parties, whatever their immigration views. A Congressional resolution to vindicate the rule of law and the Constitution's limits on executive power was defensible, and even necessary, but this message has long ago been lost in translation.

The Republican leadership funded the rest of the government in December's budget deal but isolated the Department of Homeland Security that enforces immigration law. DHS funding runs out this month, and the GOP has now marched itself into another box canyon.

The specific White House abuse was claiming prosecutorial discretion to exempt whole classes of aliens from deportation, dumping the historical norm of case-by-case scrutiny. A GOP sniper shot at this legal overreach would have forced Democrats to go on record, picked up a few supporters, and perhaps even imposed some accountability on Mr. Obama.

But that wasn't enough for immigration restrictionists, who wanted a larger brawl, and they browbeat GOP leaders into adding needless policy amendments. The House reached back to rescind Mr. Obama's enforcement memos from 2011 that instructed Homeland Security to prioritize deportations of illegals with criminal backgrounds. That is legitimate prosecutorial discretion, and in opposing it Republicans are undermining their crime-fighting credentials.

The House even adopted a provision to roll back Mr. Obama's 2012 order deferring deportation for young adults brought to the U.S. illegally as children by their parents—the so-called dreamers. The GOP lost 26 of its own Members on that one, passing it with only 218 votes.

The overall \$40 billion DHS spending bill passed with these riders, 236-191, but with 10 Republicans joining all but two Democrats in opposition. This lack of GOP unity reduced the chances that Senate Democrats would feel any political pressure to go along.

And, lo, on Thursday the House bill failed for the third time to gain the 60 votes needed to overcome the third Democratic filibuster in three days. Swing-state Democrats like Indiana's Joe Donnelly and North Dakota's Heidi Heitkamp aren't worried because they have more than enough material to portray Republicans as the immigration extremists.

Whatever their view of Mr. Obama's order, why would Democrats vote to deport people who were brought here as kids through no fault of their own? Mr. Obama issued a veto threat to legislation that will never get to his desk, and he must be delighted that Republicans are fighting with each other rather than with him.

Restrictionists like Sens. Ted Cruz and Jeff Sessions are offering their familiar advice to fight harder and hold firm against "executive amnesty," but as usual their

strategy for victory is nowhere to be found. So Republicans are now heading toward the same cul de sac that they did on the ObamaCare government shutdown.

If Homeland Security funding lapses on Feb. 27, the agency will be pushed into a partial shutdown even as the terrorist threat is at the forefront of public attention with the Charlie Hebdo and Islamic State murders. Imagine if the Transportation Security Administration, a unit of DHS, fails to intercept an Islamic State agent en route to Detroit.

So Republicans are facing what is likely to be another embarrassing political retreat and more intra-party recriminations. The GOP's restrictionist wing will blame the leadership for a failure they share responsibility for, and the rest of America will wonder anew about the gang that couldn't shoot straight.

The restrictionist caucus can protest all it wants, but it can't change 54 Senate votes into 60 without persuading some Democrats. It's time to find another strategy. Our advice on immigration is to promote discrete bills that solve specific problems such as green cards for math-science-tech graduates, more H-1B visas, a guest-worker program for agriculture, targeted enforcement and legal status for the dreamers. Democrats would be hard-pressed to oppose them and it would put the onus back on Mr. Obama. But if that's too much for the GOP, then move on from immigration to something else.

It's not too soon to say that the fate of the GOP majority is on the line. Precious weeks are wasting, and the combination of weak House leadership and a rump minority unwilling to compromise is playing into Democratic hands. This is no way to run a Congressional majority, and the only winners of GOP dysfunction will be Mr. Obama, Nancy Pelosi and Hillary Clinton.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. The Wall Street Journal wrote:

DHS funding runs out this month, and the GOP has now marched itself into another box canyon. If Homeland Security funding lapses on February 27, the agency will be pushed into a partial shutdown even as the terrorist threat is at the forefront of public attention with the Charlie Hebdo and Islamic State murders. Imagine if the Transportation Security Administration, a unit of DHS, fails to intercept an Islamic State agent en route to Detroit?

Well, the Wall Street Journal is right. These are dangerous times. Our Nation is on high alert for terror threats after the attacks in Paris and Ottawa and Sydney that have shocked the world in recent months. We don't have the luxury of playing politics with Homeland Security funding. We are trying to keep pace with threats that can occur at any time, anywhere, with little or no warning. We have to be prepared.

It is not just security grant programs for State and local first responders that would get shortchanged if we fail to pass a full-year bill. Border security, maritime security, and nuclear detection activities would be underfunded as well.

Under a short-term budget, Immigration and Customs will not have the funding they need to meet their legal mandate to have 34,000 detention beds in place for immigration detainees.

Under a short-term budget, there is no additional funding for ICE—Immigration and Customs—to hire additional investigators for anti-trafficking and smuggling cases to combat the influx of unaccompanied children at the southern border.

Under a short-term budget, there is no funding to address Secret Service weaknesses identified by the independent Protective Mission Panel in response to the White House fence-jumping incident.

Under a short-term budget, aging nuclear weapon detection equipment will not be replaced, causing gaps that could allow our enemies to smuggle a nuclear device or dirty bomb into the country.

A short-term budget would delay upgrades to infrastructure that allow for emergency communications among first responders.

A short-term budget would delay the contract for the Coast Guard's eighth national security cutter—a cutter we need for maritime security. Life-extending maintenance work on the important 140-foot icebreaking tugs, 225-foot oceangoing buoy tenders, and the Coast Guard's training vessel would be scaled back. The deep freeze on the Great Lakes in 2014 cost the shipping industry \$705 million and 3,800 jobs. Upgrading the Coast Guard's 140-foot icebreaking fleet is critical to dealing with these conditions.

A short-term budget would prevent Customs and Border Protection from awarding contracts for new remote video surveillance systems to detect border crossings and track threats.

Funding DHS should not be controversial. Playing politics and threatening to cut off critical programs that protect the country from terror attacks would result in consequences we can't afford. We should work together to pass a full-year, clean funding bill to continue the important work the Department of Homeland Security does every day to keep Americans safe.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

#### UKRAINE

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, each time I have taken to the floor to comment on the Ukrainian crisis which I have done often the situation in that hard pressed country is worse. Today we see renewed and even more violent Russian aggression ripping off more ragged bites of Ukrainian territory.

Now, ten months after Russia's invasion of its neighbor, we are again seeing calls for more assistance to Ukraine, including providing weapons that would better enable the Ukrainians to defend themselves. But still the White House dithers—baffled again by the complexities of a world that pleads for leadership. Once again we are absent not just leading from behind, which is bad enough, but in many cases not leading at all, and the world con-

tinues to look to us for guidance and for support in dealing with some of these crises.

The plight of Ukraine, torn to bits by Russian aggression, is among many foreign policy problems that have been aggravated by U.S. policy failures. Those failures have come from a White House isolated in a wasteland of confusion. The Obama administration has no coherent strategy for dealing with the world other than, in a now famous paraphrase, “Don't do stupid stuff”—whatever that means. But not doing anything is stupid stuff, and a lot of times that is exactly what is coming out of the White House nothing.

At the same time, we in Congress need to look at ourselves. We must concede that Congress also has failed to grapple with these pressing issues particularly over the last ten months relative to Ukraine. We also have failed to live up to our constitutional responsibilities. We, too, have failed to offer or compel solutions when congressional action could have helped.

One way in which we can correct that record is by giving the Ukrainian crisis our renewed attention. I am happy to say, under Republican leadership, despite what we have been prevented from doing in the past ten months, we are now in a position to begin doing just that.

Why Ukraine, and why does it deserve our full attention? For the first time since the Second World War, a European state has invaded and annexed the territory of a neighbor. This outrageous contravention of every possible standard of state behavior in the modern world passed by without a response that could have reversed the outrage and without the reaction that might forestall it being repeated in other states bordering on Russia. We will see what happens.

Vladimir Putin's ruthless ambitions have been backed by a massive Soviet style propaganda campaign that continues to include outrageous, bald faced lying by the President of Russia and his most senior Russian officials. They continue to deny what has been obvious to the world and documented, verified facts about Russian troops and equipment flowing into Ukraine and the obvious intentions of further territorial expansion.

Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's propaganda chief, invented the “big lie” theory that Putin is using to great effect. Hitler famously said that many people tell small lies, but few have the guts to tell really big ones, and when they do and the lies are repeated over and over, they become a new truth. Tragically, I believe we are at that stage in the Ukraine crisis.

At the onset of this crisis, I drafted and introduced a resolution supporting the territorial integrity of the Ukraine and condemning Russian aggression. Later, I created and introduced the Crimea Annexation Non recognition Act and the Russian Weapons Embargo Act. I also cosponsored the Russian Ag-

gression Prevention Act and the Ukraine Freedom Support Act. Unfortunately, none of these measures emerged from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during the previous session of Congress, all stymied by the committee's prior leadership. The only measure that did pass the Senate was one I coauthored and sponsored with Senator DURBIN, a resolution condemning illegal Russian aggression in Ukraine. So the Senate's record of legislative inaction does not show a Senate that has dealt effectively with this international crisis.

It is more difficult to criticize the administration for being ineffective when we in the Senate have also failed to pass almost any meaningful legislation to provide the executive branch with the advice and guidance it so obviously requires. I trust the record will improve this year and that change will begin immediately. I believe this is happening, and we will see that on this floor shortly.

In the meantime, the civil war in Ukraine continues and, until last week, almost beneath the radar. With renewed vigor, separatists, newly armed and reinforced by Russia, are waging latest and continuing battles for territory in eastern Ukraine. There is little pretense at even trying to disguise the involvement of Putin's Russia in these renewed attacks. At least 6,000 people have been killed by combat in Ukraine, more than 1,000 of them since the latest so called cease fire allegedly took effect. At least half a million people are internal refugees.

But the even greater ongoing tragedy is the geopolitical catastrophe. A newly aggressive Russia, driven by destructive delusions of nationalistic destiny, poses a threat to the stability of the region and to Europe itself. This is a completely self-evident reality for our allies on Russia's periphery, including those such as Poland and the Baltic States, who in the past have been crushed into nonexistence by Russian aggression.

If we in Congress together with the executive branch and if the United States together with our European allies cannot respond to Putin's Russia in a way that stops this dangerous aggression, then he will have won. Putin is counting on the force of his troops and his propaganda machine to create a fait accompli to which we will have little or no reply. He is counting on our distraction and exhaustion to give him a free pass. He is counting on the political complexity of our democracy to obstruct sound policymaking. And he is counting on us to falter just at the moment when his violent aggression is paying off and his people are prepared for more.

I am speaking today to urge the Senate to work quickly to change Putin's calculations about the costs he and his nation will suffer should Russia not return to rational, responsible modern state behavior. Leading in this manner will not be easy. Yes, we are besieged